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GATEWAY TO IMPERIAL COUNTY

Niland plant project begins

Hudson Ranch I is expected to be completed in 2012

NILAND — Investors and local leaders attended the groundbreaking of the long-awaited 49-megawatt Energy Source Hudson Ranch I geothermal plant near Niland on Friday.

"Unbelievably good," Energy Source President Dave Watson said about the plant's construction. "It's going to plan."

Construction officially began in July after five years of development. The project is located near Niland and will reach completion in early 2012. The project will cost between \$350 million and \$400 million.

The 49-megawatt plant will provide power to the Phoenix area but will create local jobs and economic benefits, county and Energy Source officials said.

District 4 Supervisor Gary Wyatt attended the groundbreaking. He said it will have direct economic benefits for the Valley. The project also demonstrates Imperial County's global reach.

"It shows how in Imperial County, we're very active participants in the global economy," he said. "We have people from all over the world wanting to do business."

U.S. Rep. Bob Filner,

D-Chula Vista, attended the event, too. He said the project shows government stimulus funds are providing jobs in Imperial County. He said the Valley will be a renewable energy leader.

"Our kids are going to be inspired by renewable energy — inspired not only to learn but to stay in the Valley," Filner said.

He said the flat desert landscape will eventually become some of the most productive land in the Valley.

"It looks wild, but it looks like heaven to me, and I think it's going to be heaven for the Valley," Filner said.



Shovels capped by helmets stand in a pile of dirt Friday during the ground-breaking ceremony of Hudson Ranch Power I. JOSELITO VILLERO PHOTO